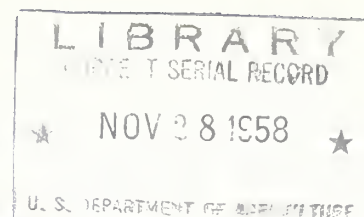


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Farm Population

ESTIMATES FOR 1958

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

Washington, D.C.

AMS-80 (1958)

November 1958

FARM POPULATION - ESTIMATES FOR 1958

The population living on farms numbered about 20,827,000 in April 1958 (table 1). This figure is not significantly different from the estimate of 20,396,000 for 1957. As farm population estimates are obtained from sample surveys, they are subject to sampling variability. The indicated increase of about 431,000 between 1957 and 1958 is within the range of variability attributable to sampling. ^{1/} Nevertheless the sample figure for a given year represents the best estimate of the farm population for that year.

The estimates of natural increase and migration shown in table 2 for the year April 1957 - April 1958 may best be used in connection with similar figures for other years to measure changes over a period of several years, as has been done in table 3. Data for these earlier years may be found in the releases indicated on page 8. Persons who use these data are encouraged to utilize the averages in table 3 rather than the single-year estimates shown in table 2.

Changes Between 1950 and 1958.--The farm population decreased 4,231,000 between 1950 and 1958. Of this decline, a majority if not virtually all, occurred between 1950 and 1954. This drop in farm population is a continuation of the long-time trend which by 1958 reduced farm residents to 12.0 percent of the total population (table A).

Table A.--Total and farm population, United States, April 1950-1958

Year	Total	Farm population		Year	Total	Farm population	
	population	Number of	Percent of		population	Number of	Percent of
	^{1/}	persons	total		^{1/}	persons	total
	(000)	(000)	(Pct.)		(000)	(000)	(Pct.)
1958	173,435	20,827	12.0	1954	161,761	21,890	13.5
1957	170,510	20,396	12.0	1953	159,012	22,679	14.3
1956	167,498	22,257	13.3	1952	156,421	24,283	15.5
1955	164,619	22,158	13.5	1951	153,691	24,160	15.7
				1950	151,132	25,058	16.6

^{1/} Including Armed Forces overseas.

During the 8-year period, approximately 567,000 babies were born annually to women living on farms and about 192,000 farm people died each year (table 3). Most of the farm population loss occurred through migration of farm persons to nonfarm places of residence. The remaining loss was the net result of changes in the classification of places as farm or nonfarm without movement of the residents. The extent of the decrease in farm population caused by such reclassification is not known. There is evidence that it was substantial in the period between 1950 and 1958 when the number of nonagricultural jobs was relatively plentiful.

Annually, more than 1.4 million persons left farms for nonfarm areas or changed the classification of their residences from farm to nonfarm between 1950 and 1958. This loss was partly offset by an average of about 549,000 persons who moved from nonfarm to farm residences or changed the classification of their residences from nonfarm to farm during each year. Thus, the change in farm population between 1950 and 1958 was the result of the net addition of about 375,000 persons annually through excess of births over deaths and a net

^{1/} Even if no actual change in the size of the farm population had occurred between 1957 and 1958, the probability is that in about 25 cases out of 100 the survey would show an increase that is greater than 431,000.

Table 1.--Farm population: Estimates of number of persons, percentage distribution, and percentage change, for the United States, regions, and geographic divisions, April 1958, 1954, and 1950

Area	Farm population						
	Number		Percentage distribution			Percentage change	
	1958	1954	1950	1958	1954	1950	between 1950 and 1958
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
United States	20,827	21,890	25,058	100.0	100.0	100.0	-16.9
Regions							
Northeast	1,881	1,925	2,097	9.0	8.8	8.4	-10.3
North Central	6,860	7,082	8,005	32.9	32.4	31.9	-14.3
South	10,160	10,903	12,793	48.8	49.8	51.1	-20.6
West	1,926	1,980	2,163	9.3	9.0	8.6	-11.0
Geographic Divisions							
New England	420	434	494	2.0	2.0	2.0	-15.0
Middle Atlantic	1,461	1,491	1,603	7.0	6.8	6.4	-8.9
East North Central	3,704	3,722	4,092	17.8	17.0	16.3	-9.5
West North Central	3,156	3,360	3,913	15.1	15.4	15.6	-19.3
South Atlantic	4,260	4,493	5,055	20.5	20.5	20.2	-15.7
East South Central	3,394	3,693	4,315	16.3	16.9	17.2	-21.3
West South Central	2,506	2,717	3,423	12.0	12.4	13.7	-26.8
Mountain	764	794	927	3.7	3.6	3.7	-17.6
Pacific	1,162	1,186	1,236	5.6	5.4	4.9	-6.0

Similar estimates for States are not available. States included in each geographic division are given on page 7.

Table 2.--Farm population: Estimates of number of persons, births and deaths, and movement of persons to and from the farm population for the United States, regions, and geographic divisions, 1957-58

Area	Farm population, April 1958	Natural increase		Change through migration and in classification of residence			Farm population, April 1957		
		Total	Births	Deaths	Net change	Between farms and nonfarm areas or the Armed Forces	From farms	To farms	Farm to farm
	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.
United States	20,827	338	518	-180	93	93	448	-355	20,396
Regions									
Northeast	1,881	25	43	-18	18	16	45	-29	1,838
North Central	6,860	113	169	-56	28	19	128	-109	6,719
South	10,160	167	259	-92	12	16	190	-174	9,981
West	1,926	33	47	-14	35	42	85	-43	1,858
Geographic Divisions									
New England	420	6	10	-4	4	3	10	-7	410
Middle Atlantic	1,461	19	33	-14	14	13	35	-22	1,428
East North Central	3,704	61	93	-32	25	19	71	-52	3,618
West North Central	3,156	52	76	-24	3	0	57	-57	3,101
South Atlantic	4,260	69	107	-38	-11	4	76	-72	4,202
East South Central	3,394	56	88	-32	-2	11	61	-50	3,340
West South Central	2,506	42	64	-22	25	1	53	-52	2,439
Mountain	764	14	20	-6	10	3	19	-16	740
Pacific	1,162	19	27	-8	25	39	66	-27	1,118

1/ Includes persons who have not moved but who were in or out of the farm population because agricultural operations ceased or were begun on the places where they were living. This type of change was not estimated separately for years since 1939 but is included in the estimates of movement to or from farms depending on the direction of the net difference between the changes from farm to nonfarm and nonfarm to farm residences.

2/ Net change in farm population of regions or divisions due to farm-to-farm movement.

Similar estimates for States are not available. States included in each geographic division are given on page 7.

Table 3.--Farm population: Births and deaths, and movement of persons to and from the farm population for the United States, regions, and geographic divisions, annual averages 1950-58 1/

Area	Natural increase			Change through migration and in classification of residence <u>2/</u>					
	Total	Births	Deaths	Net change	Between farms and nonfarm areas or the Armed Forces <u>2/</u>		Farm to farm <u>3/</u>		
					Net	To farms		From farms	
	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.	Thou.		
United States	375	567	-192	-904	-904	549	-1,453	0	
Regions									
Northeast	27	46	-19	-54	-56	60	-116	2	
North Central	112	176	-65	-255	-256	168	-425	2	
South	202	295	-94	-531	-523	245	-768	-7	
West	35	49	-14	-64	-68	76	-114	4	
Geographic Divisions									
New England	6	11	-5	-15	-16	17	-34	1	
Middle Atlantic	21	35	-14	-39	-39	43	-82	0	
East North Central	55	90	-35	-104	-105	93	-198	2	
West North Central	56	86	-30	-151	-151	76	-227	0	
South Atlantic	82	121	-39	-182	-174	91	-265	-8	
East South Central	70	103	-33	-185	-176	80	-256	-9	
West South Central	49	72	-22	-164	-174	74	-247	10	
Mountain	16	22	-6	-37	-39	28	-67	2	
Pacific	18	27	-8	-28	-29	48	-77	2	

1/ Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand without being adjusted to group totals.

2/ Includes persons who have not moved but who were in or out of the farm population because agricultural operations ceased or were begun on the places where they were living. This type of change was not estimated separately for years since 1939 but is included in the estimates of movement to or from farms depending on the direction of the net difference between the changes from farm to nonfarm and nonfarm to farm residences.

3/ Net change in farm population of regions or divisions due to farm-to-farm movement.

Similar estimates for States are not available. States included in each geographic division are given on page 7.

annual loss by movement to and from farms or through change in classification in residence of more than 900,000 persons. During this period, which included the Korean War, an annual average of 162,000 young men went from farms to the Armed Forces, and an average of more than 82,000 returned to farms from the Armed Forces.

There were no large changes in the distribution of farm population among geographic regions and divisions between 1950 and 1958. The South still has approximately half of the farm population, the North Central States about a third, and the Northeast and West each have slightly less than a tenth of the farm population. However, the proportion in the South has been gradually falling since 1940. In this region, farm population was 21 percent smaller in 1958 than in 1950 compared with a decline of 13 percent in the rest of the nation. Among the geographic divisions of the South, the West South Central showed the greatest loss-- almost 27 percent. Other divisions showing more than 15 percent decline between 1950 and 1958 were the West North Central, the South Atlantic, the East South Central, and the Mountain divisions.

Definition of Farm Population.--The data presented in this report relate to the civilian population living on farms, both urban and rural, regardless of occupation. The farm population is defined according to the definition adopted for the 1950 Census of Population. According to this definition, the farm population includes all persons living on farms, as determined by the question, "Is this house on a farm (or ranch)?" Persons living on what might be considered farm land are classified as nonfarm if they rent for cash a home and yard only. Persons in institutions, summer camps, "motels", and tourist camps are classified as nonfarm residents. Usual place of residence for unmarried persons attending college away from home is defined differently in the 1950 Census of Population and the Current Population Survey (CPS) of the Bureau of the Census from which current estimates of the farm population of the United States are obtained. In the 1950 Census, such persons were enumerated as residents of the communities in which they lived while attending college, whereas in the CPS they are considered as residents of their parents' homes. The effect of this difference is to classify a larger number of college-age persons as farm residents in the CPS than would be so classified under decennial census usages.

Note on Method of Developing Farm Population Estimates.--The foregoing tables contain estimates derived from four principal sources: (1) Current Population Surveys of the Bureau of the Census, from which the Census-AMS estimates of the total farm population of the United States are derived; (2) annual surveys of the farm population of the Agricultural Marketing Service from which the geographic distribution and components of change in the farm population are derived; (3) decennial population censuses; and (4) other related data.

Limitations of the Estimates.--Estimates for the United States presented in this report are based on data obtained in connection with the Current Population Survey of the Bureau of the Census. As the estimates are based on sample data they are subject to sampling variability. The relative sampling error of the estimated farm population of the United States is about 3 percent. The chances are about 68 out of 100 that an estimate of the total farm population from the sample would differ from a complete census by less than this percentage. The chances are about 95 out of 100 that the difference would be less than twice the specified percentage and about 99 out of 100 that it would be less than 2 1/2 times the percentage. As in any survey work, results are also subject to errors of response and nonreporting.

Data for geographic areas are based on AMS mailed-questionnaire survey data tied to benchmark figures from complete censuses and adjusted to total estimates of farm population obtained from the enumerative sample surveys of the Bureau of the Census. The reliability of any geographic area estimate is therefore dependent upon the reliability of the United States estimate, discussed above, and in addition upon the reliability of the mailed-questionnaire survey. The reliability of the estimates based on the AMS survey is dependent upon the size of the sample and the representativeness of returns from the mailed-questionnaire survey. Estimates for geographic areas may become less reliable with the passage of time since the 1950 benchmark date.

Table 4.--Replies tabulated and number of farms reported on in annual mailed-questionnaire farm population survey, 1958

Area	Replies tabulated	Farms reported on
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>
United States	22,755	100,882
Regions		
Northeast	2,573	10,578
North Central	8,746	43,821
South	8,377	34,753
West	3,059	11,730
Geographic Divisions		
New England	252	724
Middle Atlantic	2,321	9,854
East North Central	3,463	17,806
West North Central	5,283	26,015
South Atlantic	3,652	14,812
East South Central	2,520	11,118
West South Central	2,205	8,823
Mountain	1,785	7,378
Pacific	1,274	4,352

States in the geographic divisions are: New England: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut; Middle Atlantic: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania; East North Central: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin; West North Central: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas; South Atlantic: Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida; East South Central: Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi; West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas; Mountain: Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada; Pacific: Washington, Oregon, California.

Divisions in the regions are: Northeast: New England, Middle Atlantic; North Central: East North Central, West North Central; South: South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central; West: Mountain and Pacific.

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Estimates for the geographic divisions that resulted from the mailed-questionnaire survey data should be used with caution, particularly those for which the sample was relatively small. The numbers of farms reported on in the 1958 survey are shown in table 4. Size of sample is important in analyzing components of change in the farm population, especially in appraising any changes that occur from one year to another. The reliability of year-to-year changes is much less than that of trends shown during a period of several years. Figures for areas that contain relatively large numbers of people with marginal connections to agriculture may be subject to greater error than those for other divisions, even for benchmark dates.

Related Reports

Reports issued by the Agricultural Marketing Service which include estimates comparable to those in this release are:

- AMS-102 Farm Population...Annual Estimates by States. Major Geographic Divisions, and Regions, 1920-50...and for the United States, 1910-50, (November 1953, reissued April 1956).
- AMS-10 Farm Population...Migration to and from Farms, 1920-54, (December 1954).
- AMS-80 Farm Population...Estimates for 1955, (December 1955).
- AMS-80 (1956) Farm Population...Estimates for 1956, (August 1956).
- AMS-80 (1957) Farm Population...Estimates for 1957, (February 1958).

The cooperative releases of the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Bureau of the Census in Farm Population, Series Census-AMS (P-27), contain current estimates of the distribution of the total farm population of the country by age, sex, labor force status, and other related material.

